

## 2 cities, EMCC agree on design for safety facility

by **David Madrid** - Sept. 20, 2008 07:00 AM  
*The Arizona Republic*

Avondale, Litchfield Park and Estrella Mountain Community College have agreed to a basic design for the Northwest Public Safety Facility they will share.

With two options to choose from, city councils of the two cities went for Option A, a choice that not all council members wanted.

"To me, it's ugly," Litchfield Park Councilwoman Marcie Ellis said at Wednesday's meeting. She likes Option B.

Council member Peter Mahoney agreed with Ellis, who criticized the facility for being disjointed and having no flow.

At Avondale's council meeting Monday, most members liked Option B as well. But because it would cost about \$200,000 more than an already over-budget Option A, the council selected Option A.

The Option A building is about \$153,000 over budget at \$4.4 million. But the basic designs are in the preliminary phase, and the cost can be reduced by using less expensive materials or by eliminating features,

according to John Dick, president of Phoenix-based Dick & Fritsche Design Group.

Option A also was preferred by the college and the Avondale Fire and Engineering departments. The Avondale Police Department favored Option B.

### Breakdown of facility

Litchfield Park and Avondale are sharing Fire Station 174. The police substation will be Avondale's, so Litchfield Park does not share in that cost.

The cities will share a training room for fire and police. The college will have two classrooms in the facility, and Southwest Ambulance will have space there as well.

The 18,250-square-foot public safety facility will be built on the northern side of the EMCC campus, near Thomas and Dysart roads.

Option A is a contemporary design that matches EMCC's newer and future construction. It has sloping metal roofs and exposed masonry walls. The use of masonry rather than steel reduces the cost of the building because of high steel prices today, Dick said.

Option B is a Southwest contemporary

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design that matches the older college buildings. It has metal or tile roofs and stucco exterior walls.

Avondale and Litchfield Park agreed to Option A on the understanding that further design of the building would make it less bland and more colorful.

"Eventually, whichever direction you decide to proceed in, we're going to come back with a more detailed finished design that includes the color, that includes materials, that includes a lot of detailed features we've just not included yet," Dick told the Avondale council.

### **Energy-efficient facility**

The building will be designed as green as possible without being a LEED-certified building, Dick said. The facility will use energy-saving strategies, such as a north and south exposure with small windows on the south that allow natural light while protecting the building from the sun.

Add to that energy-efficient mechanical and electrical systems, low-water-use fixtures, recycled materials, natural desert landscaping and non-toxic, low-volatile organic interior finishes, such as paints and sealants, which release minimal or no pollutants.

LEED is the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System, which certifies green buildings.

"While at this point, we are not scheduled to target LEED certification, and that's primarily due to the additional cost to do that, we still want to give you a green building," Dick told Avondale.

### **Building costs**

Under the agreement, \$4 million of construction costs will be split evenly between Litchfield Park and Avondale. The college will lease its property for \$10 a year.

Litchfield Park is ending its partnership with the private Rural/Metro Fire Department. The city joined with Avondale partly to share in the Valley's automatic aid system, which Rural/Metro is not a part of.

Automatic aid means that if a house is on fire or there is a traffic accident, emergency dispatchers send the closest unit to respond, regardless of municipal boundaries.

Avondale will pay 67 percent of the operational costs of the fire station, and Litchfield Park will pay 33 percent. That works out to about \$650,000 a year for Litchfield Park. Those percentages will be periodically evaluated and adjusted if

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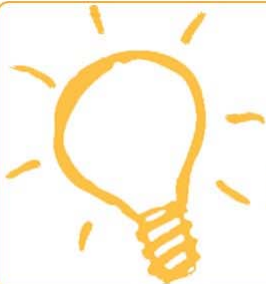
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needed.

While the fire station is being built, Rural/Metro will continue to provide fire service to Litchfield Park.

The fire station should be completed by January 2010.

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